



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com

wcf.london@gmail.com

Heaven

02- Where is Heaven?

Heaven is the place where God dwells. Heaven is the home of God.

Heaven is where,

- ✓ Our Father,
- ✓ Our Saviour,
- ✓ Our brothers and sisters,
- ✓ Our names are written,
- ✓ Our inheritance,
- ✓ Our citizenship,
- ✓ Our reward,
- ✓ Our Master, and
- ✓ Our treasure is there.

Where is heaven?

Heaven is a place.

It's a place like London.

It's a place like India, Europe, or America or any other place you know. It is a place.

Please don't look for a map because there are no maps.

It is a place where people who have glorified bodies (like Christ's resurrection body) will actually move around and live and function.

Jesus, when He came out of the grave, could eat, walk, talk, and He could drink as He did at the table with His disciples.

He could be touched and felt and recognized when He gave people the revelation that made Him recognizable in His glorified form.

So, heaven is a place for glorified people who are real - not ethereal, but real. It's a place.

1. Direction

Where is it?

It is up!

Heaven is up.

Paul says he was caught up into the third heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2, *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.*

Jesus reminded us that when He came to earth, He descended, and when He left to go back to heaven, He ascended.

Ephesians 4:8-10, *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." ⁹(Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

It's up. He came down and went back up.

The angels told the early disciples that this same Jesus who is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as you've seen Him go.

Acts 1:11, *who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

When the Lord returns, He will come down from heaven and we will be caught up from earth into heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

When God contemplates His creatures, He looks down.

Psalm 53:2, *God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.*

When man contemplates God, he looks up!

Psalm 121:1-2, *I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help? ² My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.*

When John was given a vision of heaven in Revelation.

Revelation 4:1, *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”*

The New Jerusalem, which is the eternal dwelling place of the saints, is seen coming down out of heaven.

So clearly these and other Scriptures tell us it's up.
It's up.

2. Distance

Up where?

Up in the third heaven, and beyond space is the third heaven.

How far is that?

Little science lesson.

The moon is 211,463 miles up.

In theory you could walk it in 27 years if you did 24 miles a day!

But when you get to the moon you won't be in heaven. A ray of light reaches the moon in 1.5 seconds because it's going 186,000 miles a second.

If we could go that fast, we had been in Mercury in 4.5 minutes. It's only 50 million miles.

If we were going at the speed of light, 186,000 miles a second, we had been in Mars in 4 minutes and 21 seconds.

It's only 34 million miles.

If we were going at the speed of light, 186,000 miles a second, we had been in Jupiter, 35 minutes and 11 seconds.

It's 367 million miles.

If we are going at the speed of light, we had been in Saturn in about an hour and ten seconds.

It's 790 million miles.

Uranus (that's from the Greek word *ouranos*, which means heaven) is 1.5 billion miles.

That'll take a little longer.

Neptune is about three billion miles and Pluto, billions more, and we could just, we will just keep going.

When we got past Pluto and we are way out there, we are still not in heaven.

We haven't gotten there yet.

Now let me give it to you from another perspective. Our Earth is one of nine planets revolving around the sun. Our Earth has a diameter of 8,000 miles. Its mass is estimated to be six septillion, six hundred sextillion tons.

So, we are in this massive, heavy thing, spinning around about 211,000 miles to the moon and about 93 million miles to the sun.

The sun, by the way, has a diameter of 866,500 miles and a mass 330,000 times larger than the earth.

The sun at such enormous distances and masses, is only one star. The sun is one star in a galaxy of some 100 billion other stars - all in the same galaxy.

We are still in just our little part of the universe. Distances, again, become so great that they can't be measured in terms of miles. They must be measured in lightyears, which is 186,000 miles a second. Or if that doesn't register too well, 11,160,000 miles a minute. The sun is eight light minutes away.

You start expanding your mind through all these numbers and moving out into the galaxy, and you just can't contain yourself.

For example, our solar system has a diameter of 660 light minutes, but the galaxy of which it is a very small part has a diameter of 100,000 lightyears. That's just our galaxy.

There are billions of galaxies.

Heaven is a long way away.

Jesus said to the thief on the cross “Today, you will be with me in paradise.”

That is super ultra-fast!

How can that be?

I don't know.

Paul was caught up and didn't know what was going on.

2 Corinthians 12:2-3, I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—

The Bible says it's so fast that you will be changed in a Twinkling of an eye.

That doesn't mean a blink, that means the time it takes for light to flash off your pupil. That fast.

We will be moving so fast, it's inconceivable.

Heaven is up, and heaven is far, but heaven is near.

Wherever our universe ends it is surrounded by infinite, eternal heaven. So, heaven isn't up there, heaven is - it is the infinity of the presence of God that surrounds the almost endless universe.

It's incredible. It encircles our universe and is as big as our God.

Heaven is up. It's up beyond everything that we know in the material universe. It is as big as God. It is that which engulfs within it the material universe as we know it, which is billions and billions and billions of lightyears to its extensions.

God is infinite and that's how infinite heaven is. We can't handle it because we are captive to a time/space mentality. We cannot conceive of endless, eternal heaven. But that's what the Bible teaches.

The new heaven and the new earth, at the end, the heaven that is beyond what we live in will engulf what we live in and transform it all into heaven and there won't be anything but heaven. This is my personal view!

The material universe as we know it will be wiped out. Remember how the stars are going to fall, how the moon will be turned into blood, how the heavens will roll up like a scroll, and what's going to happen. God, in the end, is going to make heaven everything.

Why will the Earth be a focal point?

Because the Earth is the theatre of redemption. The Earth was touched by the incarnate God, and it was here that He spilled His blood and redeemed His eternal people. So, the focal point in many ways will be the Earth. A little corner of the New Jerusalem may touch the Earth.

But the major city in heaven is called the New Jerusalem. It's the main city of heaven.

It is a massive, self-contained, planet-like thing, the New Jerusalem. In Revelation 21, it describes the New Jerusalem as coming down out of heaven.

If it's coming down out of heaven to find a place in the new heaven and the new earth, it must have been up there before.

We don't know when God created it.

We don't know when the new heaven and the new earth was built.

It may well have been built long ago, but we don't know that. But there is this wonderful city.

By the way, there is no indication in Scripture that it's the only city, it's just the special city. It's the main city. It's the capital city. It is a measurable place.

What is heaven like?

Overview:

a) Ezekiel

The first good view of heaven comes from the Old Testament prophecy by Ezekiel.

This is Ezekiel's vision of heaven.

It's very far but it's very near. You couldn't get there in billions and billions and billions and billions of lightyears, but you could be there today if God took you. Incredible.

Ezekiel 1:4-28, Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.⁵ Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze.⁸ The hands of a man were under

their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. ⁹ *Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.*

¹⁰ *As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.* ¹¹ *Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies.* ¹² *And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.*

¹³ *As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning.* ¹⁴ *And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.*

What he is seeing is a flashing series of lightning bolts and spinning things, and it's just an unbelievable scene that he's trying his best to describe.

¹⁵ *Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces.* ¹⁶ *The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel.* ¹⁷ *When they moved, they went*

toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went.¹⁸ As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them.¹⁹ When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.²⁰ Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.²¹ When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

²² The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures was like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads.²³ And under the firmament their wings spread out straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body.²⁴ When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings.²⁵ A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.

²⁶ And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.²⁷ Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire

all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. ²⁸Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

What is this?

This is his description of the throne of God in heaven.

What does it mean?

I don't know and neither did Ezekiel!

But he tried his best, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to give us some understanding of the fantastic and confusing picture of

- blazing light splashing off,
- polished jewels,
- coloured wheels of light,
- rainbows,
- mingled with angelic beings,
- living beings.

All around the throne of the eternal and glorious God, a moving, flashing, sparkling, spinning, rainbow of brilliance. It can't go any further than that.

Some would say the lion refers to majesty and power, and the man, intelligence and will, and the ox, to patient service, and

the eagle, to swift judgment, discernment and all of that, and maybe there's some room for finding some reality of symbols.

But what we are really looking at is the sovereignty of God, His majesty, His glory, the wonderful beauty of His heaven. The order, the symmetry, the perfection of it, all pictured in the wheels that moved perfectly in order. Almost in concert with one another, the flashing thunderbolts, the sparkling jewels, the light, all picturing God's glory. That's the picture of heaven.

It's beyond our ability to understand it.

It's inconceivable to us, the majesty, the wonder, the symmetry, the order of heaven.

b) Apostle John

The Greek word translated "heaven" occurs over fifty times in the book. Twice God is called "the God of heaven" (**Revelation 11:13; 16:11**).

Revelation 4:1, *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."*

1. Occupant:

Revelation 4:2-3, *Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. ³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.*

The red sardius may speak of God as Redeemer, the One who provided a blood sacrifice. If that is its significance, it highlights the glory of God's redemptive character.

Jasper and Sardius were the first and last of the twelve stones on the breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28:17, 20).

They represented Reuben, Jacob's oldest son, and Benjamin, his youngest.

Thus, in a sense God pictures Himself as embracing Israel.

2. Surrounding;

Revelation 4:4-5, *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*

At Mount Sinai, when God came down to give the law there was thundering and lightning (Exodus 19:16).

The writers of Scripture, seeking to describe the indescribable, portray the presence of God as filled with thunder and lightning, blinding light, and a sparkling, dazzling array of colours and rainbows.

"There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (v. 5).

That doesn't teach that there are seven Holy Spirits. Rather there is one, seven-fold Spirit, described in Isaiah 11:2,

1. the Spirit of the Lord,
2. the Spirit of wisdom,
3. the Spirit of understanding,
4. the Spirit of counsel,
5. the Spirit of strength,
6. the Spirit of knowledge, and
7. the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Revelation 4:6, *Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.*

Scripture uses colour, light, and crystal to reflect the splendour and majesty of the throne of God.

Exodus 24:9-10, *Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.*

That is a description of heaven.
It's a real place where God dwells.

In heaven is a throne from which comes flashing and sparkling light, and beneath it is a crystal clear, brilliant, sparkling sea of glass.

It's described as sapphire in one passage because of the colour reflecting off it and as clear in another because it merely picks up the colour that sparkles from the presence of the One who occupies the throne. Ezekiel described it as the colour of dazzling crystal stretched across the sky.

3. Heaven's Temple:

There's a temple there.

In an ancient city, in the middle of the city, there were two major buildings.

- One was a palace for the king and
- The other was a temple for the deity.

In the middle of a city, the palace would be against the temple. The king is in one place and God was in the other. So, you had the divine rule and the human rule.

In heaven, there is the throne of God, God as the majestic sovereign, and then there is the temple which represents God as the one who is worshiped.

He is the theme of both!

Revelation 3:12, *He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.*

There is a temple there, and we will be a pillar in that temple, he says, those who overcome.

Revelation 7:15-17, *Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

They are there before the throne of God and they serve Him day and night in His temple.

There is a temple there. That is where God is.
We are going to be in that temple going to serve Him.

Revelation 11:19, *Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.*

Revelation 15:5, *After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*

Revelation 21:22, *But I saw no temple in it (New Jerusalem), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

You can't separate the temple from God.
The temple isn't a place where God dwells, the temple is God.

The temple is God. In the holy city there is no temple but God.
God is the temple.

The throne, the temple, the throne is God, the temple is God.

There is a temple and there isn't a temple.
There is a throne and there isn't a throne.
God is the throne and God is the temple.

But that's part of the mystery of heaven.

Some feel, and it could be true, that this describes the new heaven and the new earth which is yet to be fully built. Presently, there is a temple, but when the new heaven and new earth are constructed by God, there won't be a temple.

The Temple, it isn't a building but it's the Lord Himself. By saying believers will be pillars in that Temple, Christ promised us a place forever in the very presence of God.